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# Assembly California Legislature



**JIM BATTIN**

ASSEMBLYMAN, EIGHTIETH DISTRICT

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COMMISSION OF THE CALIFORNIAS  
TEAM CALIFORNIA

March 17, 1999

Lester A. Snow  
Executive Director  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

I am writing to discuss with you some of my concerns and observations of the situation with the Bay-Delta, and how it affects my district. The 80<sup>th</sup> Assembly District encompasses California's fertile Coachella and Imperial valleys, home to farms that help to feed the nation. All or part of three major water agencies – the Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – lie in my district. Both the Salton Sea, and the New River lie within the borders of the 80<sup>th</sup> District. I also have served as a member of the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee. As such, I pay close attention to California's water issues and appreciate the significance of CALFED's task.

The revised Phase II report and draft preferred alternative released by CALFED in December is a crucial step toward accomplishing CALFED's stated goal of restoring the Bay-Delta as a dependable supply of high-quality water and a healthy ecosystem. The situation in the Bay-Delta has grown over the past 150 years of human activity in that region. I am encouraged that CALFED recognizes that no one single project or program can solve such long-term problems. Now, CALFED must continue its hard work in 1999 to fill in the gaps of the draft preferred alternative.

Southern California has several specific needs from CALFED's Bay-Delta solution. At present, the quality of Bay-Delta water is poor and declining. We need improved water quality, which will help our water providers to safeguard public health, meet future drinking water standards in a cost-effective manner, and expand water recycling projects. In addition, the State Water Project has grown undependable, largely because the regulatory agencies are in effect operating the project pumps, to meet the needs of fisheries rather than people. Southern California needs more reliable water supplies from the Delta, so our water agencies can plan effectively to meet the present and future needs of residents, businesses and agriculture.

In order to achieve these goals, CALFED needs to take several steps. It is encouraging that CALFED has acknowledged urban California's long-term needs in water quality and set good

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long-term goals. But we cannot measure CALFED's progress toward achieving the long-term objectives without having interim goals in place as well. Such milestones also will allow us to determine whether CALFED needs to take further steps such as construction of increased reservoir storage capacity or a new canal to carry water around the Delta.

Among this same line, CALFED should recognize that while conservation and recycling programs are very important, they do not improve Delta water supplies. Urban and agricultural Southern California spends millions of dollars every year to use our existing water supply efficiently and effectively. Even so, we need improved water quality and a more reliable supply, which can only be realized through construction of new groundwater and surface storage. Expanded storage capacity also will open the water transfer market, which will be very important to meeting increased water demand in California in the future.

Perhaps most importantly, CALFED needs to offer assurances to all Californians that the Bay-Delta solution will be carried out as planned. In particular, Southern California must be assured that the benefits it receives will be comparable to those gained by other areas of the state and that we will not be asked to pay more than our fair share of the solution, commensurate with the benefits we receive.

I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the revised Phase II Report and draft preferred alternative. As mentioned above, I look forward to charting CALFED's progress in the future. I sincerely hope you succeed in developing a long-term comprehensive plan that restores the Bay-Delta as a dependable, cost-effective supply of high-quality water to our cities, farms and rural areas.

Sincerely,



JIM BATTIN  
Assemblyman,  
80<sup>th</sup> District

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